

County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES

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August 22, 2007

TO: Each Supervisor

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. Browning", written over the "TO:" line.

FROM: Philip L. Browning, Director

SUBJECT: COUNTYWIDE FOOD STAMP OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

In July 2005, in response to your Board's direction, DPSS implemented a collaborative Countywide Food Stamp Outreach Campaign. This memo is to provide you with an update on the Campaign, and our Department's ongoing efforts to reduce food insecurity and hunger by increasing Food Stamp participation in Los Angeles County.

As of May 2007, the successful progress of this Countywide plan has resulted in a 12 month average of 97,173 Food Stamp Only (FSO) households, for an 18.07% average increase in the FSO caseload from June 2006 through May 2007, compared to the Countywide average of 82,295 FSO households for the period of October 2004 through September 2005. This plan includes the following elements:

- Two Intake Eligibility Workers (EWs) in each of 23 DPSS Food Stamp outreach district offices are dedicated to outreach efforts. These Outreach EWs accept and assist with Food Stamp applications at non-traditional sites, such as health clinics, food pantries, Farmer's Markets, churches and schools. Additionally, the Outreach EWs make program presentations, distribute marketing materials and conduct pre-screening events.
- Food Stamp outreach continues to be conducted with families and individuals receiving Medi-Cal, who do not receive Food Stamp benefits. During the yearly review for ongoing Medi-Cal cases, EWs are sending Food Stamp applications to potentially eligible households. Similarly, families and individuals applying for Medi-Cal continue to be encouraged to apply for Food Stamp benefits. "Ask Me About Food Stamps" buttons have also been provided to District Medi-Cal eligibility staff to supplement outreach efforts.

- In May 2007, our Department implemented a collaborative project, outstationing Food Stamp Intake EWs at selected Department of Community and Senior Services WorkSource Centers. Food Stamp Outreach Districts have established outreach schedules with 18 centers. Efforts at these sites include making presentations, performing outreach and accepting Food Stamp applications.
- DPSS continues to outstation Food Stamp Intake EWs at 11 Department of Community and Senior Services (CSS) emergency food distribution sites, including Senior Centers. Outreach EWs perform outreach and accept applications at these sites.
- Our Department completed a successful six-month pilot in December 2005, to test the effectiveness of joint Medi-Cal/Food Stamp outreach workers. The pilot included the testing of two models. One used five Outreach EWs from a traditional district office. The other used five Outreach EWs from a Medi-Cal Outreach District. These EWs performed outreach and accepted and assisted with Food Stamp and Medi-Cal applications at non-traditional sites.

To achieve the goal of increasing participation, this outreach pilot:

- Promoted positive perceptions about the Medi-Cal and Food Stamp Programs;
- Identified and took action to remove existing barriers;
- Improved access by using more creative ways to begin the application process;
- Enhanced outreach activities; and
- Enhanced existing partnerships with community-based organizations and other agencies, and actively engaged new community partners.

Due to the success of this pilot, on July 9, 2007, we implemented a Food Stamp/Medi-Cal Outreach Project. Medi-Cal Outreach EWs are now also accepting Food Stamp applications at 5 Comprehensive Health Care Centers throughout Los Angeles County. Those applications are immediately forwarded to the appropriate Food Stamp District for eligibility determination.

- DPSS continues to partner with the Mexican Consulate in Los Angeles, to provide Food Stamp outreach materials to their visitors. Also, on June 15, 2007, DPSS staff participated with the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program, Department of Education (DOE), and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) representatives in a "Train the Trainer" seminar for the Mexican Consulate. This informative and productive seminar was well received by consular staff and allowed attendees an opportunity to have questions answered regarding the Food Stamp Program.

- DPSS continues to develop relationships with School Districts to enhance our Food Stamp outreach efforts. West Valley District began a pilot in April 2007, performing outreach and accepting applications at one of Los Angeles Unified School District's health clinics. Data is being compiled to assess the success of outreach at that site.
- Our Department's Restaurant Meals Program continues to assist homeless, elderly and disabled Food Stamp participants in purchasing prepared meals at restaurants authorized by the USDA. As of June 26, 2007, DPSS has signed Memoranda of Understanding with 274 restaurants. Of these, 226 are currently operational.
- DPSS continues to regularly conduct Food Stamp outreach and accept Food Stamp applications at a mandatory orientation session, offered monthly to recently released inmates by the Department of Corrections. We also continue discussing with the Department of Corrections, the feasibility of expanding this effort to include more orientation sites.
- DPSS continues to collaborate with the Department of Children and Family Services to expand Food Stamp outreach to Foster Care Transitional Centers. Foster care youth who have reached 18 years of age will be able to apply for benefits with Outreach EWs visiting those sites. This effort is in the planning stages.
- During the months of February and March 2007, an 8-week advertising campaign was launched in English and Spanish, including bus placards, radio spots and newspaper ads. This campaign generated numerous inquiries to our Health and Nutrition Hotline. We are continuing with the newspaper ads for a year and are expanding to other newspapers in some of the other threshold languages including Armenian, Cambodian, Chinese, Tagalog, Korean and Vietnamese. The ads in these other languages are targeted to begin in August and run for 8 weeks.
- The Community-Based (CBO) and Faith-Based Organization (FBO) Food Stamp Application Assistance Project involves contracting with CBOs and FBOs with the goal of assisting potentially eligible Food Stamp applicants in completing the application and providing it, with all required supporting documentation to DPSS. A \$40 payment to the CBO/FBO will be made for applications which include all required supporting documentation and result in approval. Your Board approved 20 contracts for the project on 7/17/07. The CBO/FBO project is targeted to begin accepting applications this month.
- In June 2007, DPSS began collaborating with California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and United States Department of Agriculture—Food Nutrition Services (USDA-FNS) on developing a comprehensive strategic plan for providing better access to the Food Stamp Program for California's working poor. This effort includes identifying barriers that prevent this population from applying for Food Stamp benefits.

- A roundtable meeting was convened on July 11, 2007, by Nancy Johner, USDA Undersecretary, and included representatives from Homeland Security, DPSS, PSS Commission, agencies from Orange and San Diego Counties, and numerous community-based organizations. Barriers were identified and ideas discussed to better serve the communities of Los Angeles County.

Increasing Food Stamp participation among eligible households continues to be a priority for DPSS, in partnership with a wide variety of community partners. I will continue to report to you on the progress of our Food Stamp Outreach efforts on a semi-annual basis.

PLB:ms

c: Chief Executive Officer
Deputy CEO
Deputy Chief Financial Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors